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ABSTRACT

This book describes the impact of U.S. government social, cultural and educational policies on a Native American family and its tribe--the Choctaw--from 1763 to 1995. The book intertwines a personal quest for family roots in Choctaw tribal history with traditional historical methodology to examine the direct relationship between educational policies and social and cultural change among the Choctaws. The first part of the book, which covers the period prior to removal from ancestral southern lands, contrasts government and missionary goals with the desires and social organization of Choctaws and Cherokees. Ironically, the intersection of government, missionary, and tribal goals resulted in social changes among the tribes that defeated the U.S. government's major purpose of gaining tribal lands. Subsequently, the tribes were removed to lands west of the Mississippi. The second section focuses on educational history of the Choctaws in Indian Territory from the early 1830s to 1907; analyzes development of the Choctaw government and school system and evolution of distinct social classes; discusses the Choctaw alliance with the Confederacy during the Civil War, slavery, and the growth of a segregated school system; and describes the end of the Choctaw Nation and its school system. The final chapters analyze the consequences of schooling on the tribe and on the family and other mixed-blood families. The conclusion is that values of the Protestant ethnic--hard work, acquisitiveness, selfishness, and domination of nature--destroyed Native Americans; have the potential to destroy human happiness; and should be replaced with values of minimum work, sharing, and the sacred hoop of nature. Contains references in chapter endnotes, an index, and photographs. (SV)